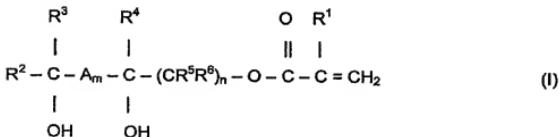


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for preparing a compound of formula I



where

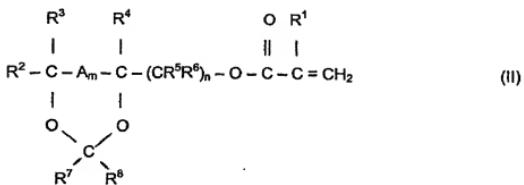
R^1 is H or CH_3

A is (CH_2) where m has the values of 0 or 1,

R^{2-6} are the same or different and are OH, H, aliphatic or aromatic hydrocarbon, ,
 n has the values of 0, 1 or 2,

comprising reacting

a compound of the formula II



where R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, A, m and n are each as defined above and R⁷ and R⁸ may be the same or different and are methyl, ethyl or propyl, with water in amounts wherein the ratio of compound (II) to water is between 1:1 and 1:3 over an acidic ion exchanger in a fixed bed, and the resulting compound III



is removed continuously from the reaction medium, and

wherein no dried air is blown into the reaction medium to remove water or compound

(III) therefrom.

Claim 2 (Original): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein stabilization against polymerization and discoloration is effected with tocopherol derivatives.

Claim 3 (Original): The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein stabilization against polymerization and discoloration is effected with tocopherol in an amount of 10 ppm - 1000 ppm based on the monomer mixture.

Claim 4 (Original): A method for producing a contact lens comprising utilizing the compound of Formula I produced by the process as claimed in Claim 1 to produce the contact lens.

Claim 5 (Original): A method for producing a water-soluble polymer comprising utilizing the compound of Formula I produced by the process as claimed in Claim 1 to produce the water-soluble polymer.

Claim 6 (Original): The process as claimed in Claim 1, wherein R²⁻⁶ are the same or different and are methyl, ethyl, propyl or isopropyl.

Claim 7 (New): The process as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the ratio of compound (II) to water is between 1:1.1 and 1:2.5.

Claim 8 (New): The process as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the ratio of compound II to water is between 1:1.2 and 1:2.

Claim 9 (New): The process as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a pre-reaction is carried out between compound II and water present in the acidic ion exchanger, whereby a reaction mixture comprising compound I and compound III is formed.

Claim 10 (New): The process as claimed in Claim 9, wherein following the pre-reaction, the reaction mixture subsequently passes through a separating column, wherein compound III is distilled out of the reaction mixture and recycled to the fixed bed.

Claim 11 (New): The process as claimed in Claim 1, wherein compound III is removed by reduction in pressure.